.: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

four households with six houses. The school village had been laid out in rectangular fashion without any palisade and with eucalyptus trees planted around the sides. The school was at the centre and the elder's house at the upper corner. These two larger buildings and one other were built of adobe, while the rest of the twelve houses were of wattle and daub, identical with those in the other wards except that all were rectangular. There were a few very small gardens watered by an irrigation ditch. The people of this village had river gardens, and their fields were mostly to the south between the village and the highway. Just to the east of the main village and beside one of the water-holes, a Roman Catholic catechist had established himself, but as yet he had neither village nor school.

The Villagers

Turning now to the people living in this village, it was interesting to find that all save the households of two former slaves and the Roman Catholic catechist, were related to each other, either by blood or by marriage. Sekulu Cipange of Ciyanda summed the matter up when he said, 'Likuluta Samikanjo (the Protestant elder) is my younger brother (*manjange*), for in our Umbundu country (we) people do not build together (i.e. in the same village) unless we are blood relatives.' In order to determine the exact relationships and other facts regarding the demography of this village, I took the names of all householders and their wives, and inquired their relationships to the elders of the respective wards. This information was supplied by Njomba, a son of Sekulu Sikĩlĩlẽ, and by Sekulu Likuluta Samikanjo. In addition to those of the four elders, there were twenty-four households. The relationship of each of the householders to their respective elders may be summarized as follows:

A. *Paternal relatives*		
In Sikĩlĩlẽ's village	21	
„ Ciyanda	1	
„ Kanjengo's ward	2	
„ School village	2	
	—	26
B. *Maternal relatives*		
In Ciyanda	1	
„ Kanjengo's ward	1	
„ School village	4	
	—	6

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

C. *Sister's sons (or daughters)*[1]		
In Ciyanda	1	
„ School village	4	
	—	5
D. *Relatives by marriage*		
In Sikīlīlē's	2	
„ School village	1	
	—	3
E. *Relationship not exactly determined*[2]		
In School village	2	
	—	2
F. *Former slaves*		
In Sikīlīlē's	1	
„ School village	1	
	—	2
Total of householders		44

The above figures show more precisely than would several pages of explanation the family nature of the Umbundu village. That the Ovimbundu are patrilocal was noted by Hambly.[3] Whether the proportions which the above figures indicate would hold for all the Ovimbundu could only be determined by gathering similar data over widely representative areas. The same approximate distribution holds for the families represented by 192 genealogies and 74 marriage-schedules which I have collected. Matrilocal residence or residence in the wife's village has always been recognized by the Ovimbundu as a possibility, although less desirable than the ideal of patrilocal marriage and residence. Of the two householders in Sekulu Sikīlīlē's village who were related to him by marriage, one was the husband of a daughter and the other a widow of a younger brother, who should have been inherited by a younger brother or a mother's brother of the deceased. Failing that, she might have returned to her father's people, but her having settled in the village of her husband's elder brother is no cause for surprise. My experience leads me to believe that Ngendo is an approximately fair sample of the present strength of patrilocal residence among the Ovimbundu. That the Protestant school village is a real part of this kinship unit is an important fact, the significance of which will be discussed later.

[1] The two daughters were widows who had come to live with their mother's brothers.

[2] In these two cases relationship was declared to exist, but I failed to find its nature.

[3] Hambly, op. cit., p. 191.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

593 only by a sister), and *mukãi* (sister, spoken only by a brother). In
[561] a polygynous household each of the wives is mother to all the children and each of the children is *huva* or *manja*[1] to all the others.
848 Illegitimate children are not stigmatized but since they belong to
567 the mother they have a distinct designation.[2] Slaves or former slaves have a status within the household and village which to the ordinary observer does not differ from that of the children: they are treated much as the children and they may carry on in all matters social and economic much as though they were members of the family. I have noticed, however, that when there is a call for labour, the lot falls oftener to one of these 'children-born-by-day'[3] whether he was a war-captive or a pawn.

567 Both slavery and the polygynous household, two institutions
595 manifestly and intimately inter-related, are still a part of the
178 Umbundu social structure, but neither the one nor the other now has the importance which it formerly had. Neither of these institutions is part of the present and personal experience of the great majority of Umbundu households.

Kinship

596 *Blood Relatives* (*Epata*). The relationships of the wider kinship
• 602 groups are for the most part extensions of those of the household.
621 The child learns them very early in life owing to the fact that the village community into which he is born is only a part of this larger kinship group. Nearly all of the villagers belong to the same *epata* or extended family, which includes both lines of descent. Most of them belong to the father's family (*oluse*), and the mother's family (*oluina*) may also be represented. The fact is that most of the adults of the village are father or mother to nearly every child and most of the children are brothers or sisters. Those of his coevals who do not bear this relation to him are otherwise related and are also potential spouses or potential relatives-in-law.

[1] This distinction *yesepakai* (lit. 'of the jealousy of women') may be made but it is not applied in ordinary speech.

[2] *Omõlã a ngenda-la-ina* (lit. 'child of goes-with-mother').

[3] *Omãlã-va-citima-lutanya*. Cf. 'child of my calves', Luganda expression and attitudes, L. P. Mair, *An African People in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1934), p. 32 f.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

Oluse	*Oluina*
RELIGIOUS	
Regular village worship including agricultural festivals; village headman is also priest.	Family observances including occasional propitiations in case of illness, death, or other misfortunes; for desired economic advantages; mortuary rites. Family head is also priest.

Classificatory System of Relationship. The relationships of the wider kinship groups are quite largely extensions of those of the household, but the Ovimbundu, in common with all people who have a classificatory system, extend these relationships not only further but in quite different ways than do those who have the European (Roman) system. One who would understand the Ovimbundu must understand the Umbundu family from the inside—not as from motives of mere intellectual curiosity but as an Ocimbundu understands it. In order to demonstrate this family structure it will be necessary to present tables and diagrams. Hambly did a very creditable piece of work toward demonstrating the structure of the Umbundu family.[1] I doubt that anyone staying among them an equally short period of time, not knowing their language, could have done better in this respect unless he had come to the task with very exceptional preparation. It is only just to state this and I feel that it is necessary because so far as I am aware, in the five years since it was published, the book has received no adequate appraisal or review.[2] It must be said, however, that Hambly made some noticeable errors in his use of kinship terms owing to the fact that he did not learn the Umbundu language, and that he evidently failed to understand certain points with regard to the social structure.

For greater clarity and precision I am presenting in separate tables the terms which refer to blood relationship and those which refer to relationship by marriage.

[1] W. D. Hambly, op. cit., pp. 189–99.

[2] This book was reviewed in *Africa*, 1935, pp. 391–3, but the reviewer had no first-hand knowledge of the people or their language, which was perhaps his reason for taking up three-fourths of the space at his disposal with questions of orthography. E. W. Smith has taken note of the book (*Africa: What Do We Know of It?*, p. 71), but only to say that it 'is chiefly useful for its description of the material culture'.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

601

E. *Second Ascendant Generation: Either Man or Woman the Speaker*

Term	*Relation*	*Reciprocal term*
1. *Maïkulu*[1] (*Nyokulu*)	grandmother, both maternal and paternal grandmother's sister grandfather's sister	*onekulu yange*
2. *Sekulu*[1] (*Tatekulu*)	grandfather, both maternal and paternal grandfather's brother grandmother's brother	*onekulu yange*

F. *Third Ascendant Generation*

Kuku	all relatives of this generation	*onekuluila* or *omoholole yange*

G. *Fourth Ascendant Generation*

Kukululu	all relatives of this generation	*onene yange*

H. *Fifth Ascendant Generation*

Kukululua	all relatives of this generation	*onsi yange*

I. *Sixth Ascendant Generation*

Ku	all relatives of this generation	*oneka yange*

J. *First Descendant Generation*

1. *Omõlunge*	my own child woman's sister's child man's brother's child mother's sister's grandchild father's brother's grandchild	*tate* or *mãi*
mufuli or *uveli*	first-born child	
2. *Ocimumba*	woman's brother's child man's sister's child mother's brother's grandchild father's sister's grandchild	*tatehãi* or *mamu*

The kinship terms for further descendant generations will be found in the column of 'reciprocal terms' given above. It does not seem necessary to repeat them.

602 592 The patterns of behaviour between these many blood relatives find their prototypes in the patterns of the household. Love for

[1] *Maïkulu* and *Sekulu* are sometimes used interchangeably for persons of either sex. Each has only the two personal forms. The forms in parenthesis are but little used. *Inakulu* is used for the queen.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

602 592 the mother who bore me and the consideration naturally expected from her cannot, in the nature of things, be given or received by *all* of the elder and younger mothers in exactly equal degree, but the type of behaviour is similar. The elder sister who carried her younger brother about on her back when she herself could hardly more than walk, or the elder brother who first taught his younger brother to make and set his little traps, has a warmth of regard which he cannot extend with just the same force to fifty or one hundred younger brothers, but nevertheless the pattern will be of the same sort if and when similar opportunity offers. The same may be said for the younger and the elder fathers, and again for the *tatekãi*, the 'female father'. But here elements other than 605 604 the early household patterns enter as also with *manu*, the mother's brother. Chief of these other elements is the fact that these two classes of relatives, together with the *va cepua*, i.e. cross-cousins (mostly children of the *manu* and *tatekãi* classes), and also the *ovimumba* (plural) (one's own nephews along similar lines of descent), are all potential spouses or potential relatives-in-law.[1] The relations of *ocimumba* (sister's son) and *manu* (mother's brother) in Umbundu society follow a pattern not exactly like any other set of relationships in any society of which I know. Suggestions of this have already been given. The *manu* shares his sister's desire for the advancement of her son, and if the nephew has had a part of his education in the uncle's home or on his trading expeditions, the relationship will have become closer. It may be, however, that the uncle's own difficulties may lead him to exploit his nephew rather than to attend only to his advancement.[2] The 602 178 ties of the paternal group tend to be strengthened at the expense of the maternal family and it seems that the increasing localization of the Umbundu family with the supplanting of trade by agriculture (as a man's full-time occupation) has furthered this process.

602 It is very important for one who would understand the Ovimbundu to look upon the Umbundu kinship structure with the eyes of an Ocimbundu. If one brought up to other ideas and other relationships finds this difficult, that is all the more reason for making the effort. I cannot better summarize the Umbundu

[1] See *infra*, pp. 52 ff.

[2] This is one of several points where the commercial tendencies seem to come into conflict with the patterns of the kinship group.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

attitude toward one's blood relations than by quoting Mrs. 602 ●
Hoernlé:

> Here, then, is a large body of kin drawn intimately into contact with the lives of each generation. Looking out into the world from his own home, the Bantu child knows where he may seek hospitality and succour of every kind; where, also, he may of right be called upon to render assistance in case of need. The barriers of reserve shutting off human beings from one another are largely down so far as these classes of relatives are concerned, so that for economic assistance, for friendly counsel, in time of sorrow and in time of joy, these are the natural categories of people to turn to, the core of people with whom one is close-knit from birth in a web of reciprocal rights and duties.[1]

The Kin

Relatives by Marriage. Marriage profoundly alters the relation- 581
ship of those who enter into it, that is, the two families. It must be entered into with great care and with due regard for all factors concerned in order that the balance of life may be maintained. It seems that the financial arrangements (*ilombo*) are designed to restore to the bride's family an equivalence for her loss, since marriage is patrilocal. The Ovimbundu consider mutual respect between the two families to be a necessary basis for a successful marriage. Respect (*esumbilo*) is the reason assigned by thoughtful [593]
Ovimbundu for the various avoidances (*oku liyuvuila*) enjoined upon the principals and their respective families. In the first place, the husband and wife must show their respect for each other by avoiding certain actions as, for example, either one speaking the name of the other.

This mutual respect finds its most dramatic symbol in the treat- 606
ment which the husband must accord his mother-in-law, the bride her father-in-law. They must avoid seeing each other, and if it is necessary to converse, it must be done out of sight, or with gaze averted. Both husband and wife must also avoid pronouncing the names of the parents-in-law. By the principle of extended relationships, this behaviour applies to the relations of the husband and the wife with *all* their parents-in-law of the opposite sex. As all the mother's 'sisters' are 'mother', so to the husband they are all *ndatembo* (mother-in-law). Likewise, the father's 'brothers' all

[1] In Schapera, op. cit., 1937, p. 73.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

182 621 in a somewhat decadent state, the Umbundu village has up to the present maintained its status as a local kinship unit.

182 592 602 The household is not a solitary unit but a part of the village. Since it is constituted by marriage, it embodies the union of at least two kinship groups. The attitudes and behaviour patterns within the Umbundu household are basically those universally recognized. In common with the households of most Bantu cultures, it differs from the European model in that it extends its attitudes and behaviour patterns to the wider kinship groupings by means of a classificatory system of relationship.

613 182 In the wider kinship groupings (*epata*), the Ovimbundu recognize both the maternal (*oluina*) and the paternal (*oluse*) lines of descent. The functions of the latter have been largely local, residential, social, and religious, with succession (of status) in the male line. The function of the former has been cohesive over a larger territory, with a recognized head in whom has been vested both religious and economic functions. Both his office and the inheritance of property descend in the female line. Much of the power, economic and personal, formerly held by the *oluina*, in the person of the mother's brother, seems to be passing at the present time to the *oluse*, in the person of the father. The bilineal kinship system has been a strongly cohesive social force.

182 [582] The form of marriage practised by the Ovimbundu is of the two-way cross-cousin type in both lines of kin and in three generations. It seems to be an individual type developed in the particular social and economic situation of the Ovimbundu. As a contract between two families and as a new venture, the marriage relation demands that great attention be given to attitudes and behaviour patterns which emphasize mutual respect.

[561] The hierarchy of age is a very real factor in the Umbundu social structure. Age-set 'schools' have not existed generally throughout the tribes, but there are associations of coevals. This is largely a cohesive force.

754 Sorcery is the most important disruptive force at work *within* Umbundu society. Working as it does, within kinship groups, and inasmuch as it seems to be on the increase, sorcery embodies a real danger to social cohesion.

184 178 Homogeneity has never been an attribute of the Ovimbundu as regards their racial or cultural make-up. The slave-trade injected other and more diverse elements, and recent movements and

611 dispersed. Both groups have ritual leaders, whose offices are quite dis-
613 tinct. Barnes' suggestion(1) is that the two groups must be father's patrilineage and mother's matrilineage, with the qualification mentioned below.

613 The *oluse* consists of a large number of village groups, some of which
622 recognise mutual relationship,(2) but with no recognised head (other than the village headmen) except in the case of the royal families. Land is owned by the *oluse* and passed on within it from father to son, or from
[428] elder to younger brother. Succession to village or tribal office, from village headman to king, descends in the same way.(3) Ritual leadership within the *oluse* lies with the village headman, who is in charge of the
[346] spirit-hut *(etambo)* of the guardian spirit of the village (or of the nuclear *oluse* within the village), and who officiates at regular village worship, including agricultural festivals.

613 The *oluina*, on the other hand, is a dispersed and apparently larger
428 group, whose members live with their various paternal lines of descent. The size of the *oluina* is unknown; Childs merely refers to it as a "large
604 and widespread organization, with a recognized head". The office of head of the *oluina (ukulu wepata)* descends from mother's brother to sister's son. Negotiable and moveable property, including cattle and trade goods, is owned by the *oluina* and inherited by the sister's son. Formerly the mother's elder brother had great powers over his sister's sons, and was even able to pawn them or sell them into slavery, to meet his own debts.
[592] The patrilocal household is usually responsible for training children, especially during their early years, but they are frequently sent to the *oluina* (i.e. to the mother's brother) for at least a part of their educa-
[586] tion. At death or divorce of parents, children go to the *oluina*.

43 The head *(ukulu wepata)* of the *oluina* is usually both the legal and
782 spiritual head of the group, although today the two functions are often divided. He is in charge of the spirit hut *(etambo)* of the guardian spirit of the *oluina* (of whom there may be more than one, and of whom he becomes one after death). He leads the *oluina* in propitiatory rituals carried out in case of illness, death, or other misfortunes within the group, or in prayers made for desired economic advantages. (Apparently no regular rituals are carried out by the *oluina*.) The *ukulu wepata* may or may not be at the same time a village headman; if he is, he will be priest of two lines and have charge of two spirit huts; if he is not, there may be two (or more) priests in the village, each in charge of the spirit-hut of his *oluse* or *oluina*.

The onẽlẽ yohonji and the onẽlẽ yohumba

613 The *oluse* and the *oluina* are both divided into male and female
602 "sides": the *onẽlẽ yohonji* (the side of the bow) and the *onẽlẽ yohumba* (the side of the basket). It has been noted above that uterine brothers
582 and sisters belong to the same *oluse* and *oluina*, but to the male or female side in each, according to sex. The composition of these "sides" is

(1) Loc.cit.
(2) If some villages within the *oluse* cannot trace mutual relationship, the *oluse* should perhaps be called a patri-clan rather than a patrilineage.
(3) But see below, p.29.

613 602 582

however not at all clear. They seem to group simply all the male members and all the female members of the *oluse* and of the *oluina*; but this conflicts with the information given on marriage.(1) A man may marry into the male side of his mother's kin or into the female side of his father's kin. Hence there must be some women in the male side, and, presumably, some men in the female side. A man cannot marry a parallel cousin, but he may marry:

(a) a father's sister. She presumably belongs to the female side of the *oluse*, which presents no difficulty.

(b) a sister's daughter. She appears to belong to the female side of ego's mother's kin, while a man should marry into the male side of his mother's kin.

(c) a female cross-cousin. If the *oluse* and the *oluina* were merely father's patrilineage and mother's matrilineage, as has been suggested, cross-cousins are excluded from both groups. In a footnote,(2) however, Childs seems to imply that mother's brother's daughter belongs to ego's mother's kin. Barnes therefore suggests that children of men of the matrilineage may be included in the *oluina*, falling into the male side irrespective of sex, and similarly the *oluse* may include in the female side all the children of women of the patrilineage. By this hypothesis:

(a) a sister's daughter would fall into the female side of ego's *oluse*.

(b) a mother's brother's daughter would fall into the male side of ego's *oluina*.

(c) a father's sister's daughter would fall into the female side of the *oluse*.

602 613 611

The descent system: summary

The descent system suggested may then be summarised thus:

(1) *oluse* (father's kin)

(a) *onĕlĕ yohonji* (male side): all men in the patrilineage.

(b) *onĕlĕ yohumba* (female side): all women in the patrilineage, and all sons and daughters of women in the patrilineage.

(2) *oluina* (mother's kin)

(a) *onĕlĕ yohumba* (female side): all women in the matrilineage.

(b) *onĕlĕ yohonji* (male side): all men in matrilineage, and all sons and daughters of all men in the matrilineage.

According to this hypothesis every person belongs to four distinct groups. A man must belong not only to the male side of the two groups centred in the father's patrilineage and the mother's matrilineage, but also to the male side of his father's matrilineal group and to the female side of his mother's patrilineal group. There are still only two systems

(1) Childs, op.cit., p.53. (2) P.53, fn.3.

611 of groups, but a man belongs to two groups within each system. Similar membership is required for a woman. A man shares with all his children 613 his membership of the male side of his mother's matrilineal group, and shares with his sons membership of the male side of his father's patri- 602 lineal group. His daughters belong to his father's patrilineal group but to its female side. He does not transmit to his children membership of his father's matrilineal group or his mother's patrilineal group.(1) This is illustrated by the diagram on page 21.

601 *Kinship terminology*

Patterns of behaviour between all blood relatives find their prototypes in the household. The following list of kinship terms is selected from the more detailed list given by Childs.(2)

Term		*Reciprocal*
mai	mother, mother's sister, etc.	*omolange*
tate	father, father's brother, etc.	*omolange*
tatekai	("female father") father's sister	*ociumba cange*
manu	mother's brother	*ociumba cange*
huvange	elder brother or sister, and male or female parallel cousin, if older than ego	*manjange*
kota	eldest brother (of family or household)	*manjange*
(epalume		
(upalume	male or female cross-cousin	*epalume, upalume,* or *cepua*
(cepua		
mukai	sister or female parallel cousin (M.S.)(3)	*mume*
mbuale	" " " " (W.S.)	*mbuale*
maikulu	grandmother, grandparents' sister	*onekulu yange*
sekulu	grandfather, grandparents' brother	*onekulu yange*

Note: (a) There is no word used exclusively for "brother" by a man, although a woman may use *mume* in this sense. *Huvange* and *manjange* are used by either men or women for elder or younger brothers or sisters.

(b) *maikulu* and *sekulu* are sometimes used interchangeably for persons of either sex.

MARRIAGE

582 *Marriage within the kin group*

The most desirable marriage is marriage within the circle of kin, i.e. (as noted above) into the male line of the *oluina* or the female line of the *oluse*. (There appears to be a preference for marriage within the *oluina*.(4)) One may not marry one classed as brother, sister, father, mother, grandparent, child or grandchild, for such a union would involve

(1) This paragraph is largely quoted from Barnes, loc.cit.
(2) pp.47-9.
(3) M.S. = man speaking, W.S. = woman speaking.
(4) Childs, op.cit., p.53, note 3.

582 incest *(oku ndo)*. But one may marry relatives of one's own age-level who belong to classes other than those mentioned, i.e. cross-cousins and, on other age-levels, father's sister or sister's daughter. It is said that formerly marriage never took place except between persons who could trace relationship in this way. Today this principle is very liberal in its application.(1) (It would be interesting to have estimates of the number of men who do marry first degree cross-cousins, father's sisters, or sister's daughters, as distinct from classificatory relatives of these classes, and the number who marry outside the *oluse* or *oluina*.)

583 Marriage was formerly arranged by the mother's brother (i.e. by the *oluina*), but today there is a tendency for fathers to arrange their daughters' marriages and to receive their marriage payment. (And also, occasionally, to assist their sons in providing marriage payment.)(2) *Ilombo*, or marriage payment, was formerly paid in cattle, blankets etc.(3) Today it is usually paid in cash, the amount being determined by the status of the bride.(4)

Polygyny

621 595 In the sample village (Ngendo, Kasongi chiefdom) described by Childs, of a total of 48 households,

(a) 10 households were polygynous; of these 9 contained only 2 wives or concubines, and the tenth, that of the headman, contained four wives and one concubine,

(b) 27 households were monogynous, and 3 more were occupied by widowers, all formerly monogynous. (The remaining households were occupied by 7 widows and one young unmarried man.)

Childs notes that the proportion of polygynous households in Kasongi chiefdom is probably higher than in other parts of Ovimbundu country for two reasons: the comparatively low marriage-payment in Kasongi as compared with other areas, and the proximity of Kasongi to Esele country, which has long been a source of supply for slave concubines. (Of the 10 polygynous households in Ngendo 5 contained at least 1 Esele concubine.)(5)

Avoidance between in-laws

602 Mutual respect *(esumbilo)* between the two kin groups involved is considered a necessary basis for a successful marriage, and is the reason given for the various avoidances *(oku liyuvuila)* enjoined upon the principals and their respective relatives. These avoidances may be summarised:-

593 (a) A husband and wife must avoid using each other's names.

601 (b) The term *ndatembo* is used for parents-in-law of either sex, and reciprocally for sons-in-law or daughters-in-law. The term is extended to all those whom one's spouse calls "mother", "father" or "child" (Childs, p.52) and apparently also to those whom one's spouse calls *manu*, *tatekai* or

(1) Childs, p.54.
(2) Fanis, 1945.
(3) Cushman, 1944, p.45.
(4) Childs, personal communication.
(5) Childs, page 30.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

601 *Sekulu* includes the father's father, the mother's mother's brother, and the mother's mother's sister's husband. The terms *sekululu* and *kukululu* were used by Ngonga as being synonymous, and therefore they have the same connotation. With regard to the term *maikulu* Ngonga seemed clear, but in reply to questions concerning the reason for having the terms *kukululu* and *sekululu*, he was evidently confused. At last he said, "It does not matter, they are the same people." Ngonga never hesitated in giving the reciprocal for all these terms, which is in every instance *onekulu*. These terms may have been correlated with different functions which have now become obsolete.

604 601 The two most important collateral relatives in the parent's generation are the father's sister (*aphai*) and the mother's brother (*manu*). The term for father's sister means "female father." As such her relations to ego are similar to those of a father, consequently it is not considered right to marry her daughters. The mother's brother, on the other hand, is without doubt ego's most important relative. The two are linked by a series of reciprocal duties and obligations. Marriage of a mother's brother's daughter, or a mother's brother's widow, is a correct procedure. The value of the more important reciprocal duties is indicated in the following sections on law and government.

602 171 There was no possibility of devoting more time to the matter of relationship terms, but there is here sufficient to indicate the remarkable persistence of the kinship system in spite of three centuries of contact with the Portuguese and other Europeans. Moreover, the information gleaned by interrogation of Ngonga and his wife gives the main points for comparison with systems of a similar kind that have been given for Ashanti, Uganda, and Rhodesia, by Rattray, Roscoe, and Smith and Dale respectively. These kinship systems are the same both in general principles and in considerable detail.

601 The foregoing notes and tables were studied by Mr. Zachary Taylor of the University of Chicago, who prepared Tables E and F. Mr. F. Eggan offered useful criticisms. The Arabic numerals on these charts refer to the numbers used to designate terms of [115] relationship on the list on page 199. The ego or speaker is Ngonga, my interpreter, whose direct line of relationships is shown in Table E, while Table F indicates the terms used by Ngonga for his wife's relatives. The levels numbered in Roman numerals on Tables E and F indicate the generation stratification as follows:

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

764 The interpretation of the chanting is "God has cheated me of a life." That is, God gave a life and he has taken it.

My interpreter, who was a relative of the deceased boy, explained to the people that I was seriously interested. This was necessary, (123) as they were afraid of ridicule and hostile opinion. I sat down by the father of the dead boy and talked with him through my interpreter. In the meantime I observed that the corpse was in a cloth-covered box slung on a pole, which was supported on the shoulders of two men who stood very close to the drummers. The bearers remained immovable except for the occasional changing of the coffin pole from one shoulder to another. At intervals women came out from the group to dance near the coffin, one, two, or three at a time. One boy was particularly energetic in leaping in front of the corpse. When the performers had danced they returned to the crowd from which other persons immediately advanced. These detached and spontaneous performances each lasted about two minutes.

After two hours the bearers of the coffin moved away, followed on one side by some of the men, on the other side by a few women. A large number of men and women remained behind with the drummers. The music and the solo dancing continued. The corpse was removed to a place about a hundred yards from the spot where the initial ceremonies had been performed. The bearers still held the coffin on their shoulders, while men and women seated themselves on each side of the bier. This part of the proceeding was solemn and there was little conversation, though tobacco-smoking continued among both men and women (Plate XLV, Fig. 1).

A woman about forty-five years of age held a plate of corn meal in her hand while she stood close to the corpse and in line with the bier. She addressed the corpse very earnestly and paused intermittently for a reply. While speaking, the woman looked intently at the foremost of the bearers, who both stood immovable with their heads inclined forward and eyes directed to the ground.

764 My interpreter (Ngonga) said that the woman addressing the
602 corpse was the oldest sister of the father of the dead boy, and that she was asking the spirit of the dead boy why he died. Here Ngonga threw a side light on family relationships.

The father of the dead boy was the son of Ngonga's mother's brother. The dead boy used to call Ngonga *tate* ("my father"); Ngonga called him *omolãnge* ("my child"). When the woman had addressed the corpse an old man took her place. He held up the

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plate of meal and earnestly asked questions. Lukuma was the name of the father of the dead boy. The old man who addressed the corpse was the brother of Lukuma's mother. Ngonga explained that the woman addresses the corpse, "to give him sense so that he will not be ashamed to tell all about it"; that is, about the manner of his death. The old man said to the corpse, "*Etali* ["today"] *omolângè* ["my boy"] *tu yongola* ["we want"] *oku* ["you"] *tu* ["us"] *sanjuisa* ["make glad"] *o tu* ["to us"] *sapuila* ["tell"] *muele* ["indeed"] *cosi* ["all"] *ca* ["that"] *ku upa* ["you take"] *kilu lieve* ["from earth"].

The pause which followed a question was intended to give the corpse time to reply. It is supposed that if the answer is in the negative the spirit causes the pole to swing slightly backward. An affirmative answer is given if the spirit makes the pole swing forward. The old man demanded, "Is it witchcraft that hates us and killed you? If it is witchcraft, come to the front." I could see no swing of the corpse on the pole, but Ngonga said that he could see the coffin swing backward to indicate a negative answer. I suspected that the interrogator of the corpse gave a signal to the bearers, indicating that the coffin was to be made to swing, but I could see no signal or movement of the coffin. While the corpse was interrogated, males among the spectators spoke to the old man who was asking the questions. Ngonga explained that these men were suggesting questions which might be asked respecting the cause of death. A witness in the crowd would say, "You have forgotten this," or "You have forgotten that."

The next question was one that calls for a detailed explanation. *Sambulu* is a bad spirit which is able to cause death when crying women and children offend him by their wailing. The mother of the dead boy was a slave whose husband was absent from the village for a time. During this period the master of the woman threatened to sell her; consequently she went to a Christian mission with her children, one of whom was the boy now deceased. The woman and children were crying, hence the possibility that the evil *Sambulu* had at that time entered the person of the boy whose funeral rites were now in progress. The woman had visited the mission a year ago, but this lapse of time apparently made no difference to the possibility that *Sambulu* had entered one of the children. The spirit made a negative answer to this ingenious suggestion and eventually indicated that death was due to a "bad belly." If no answer is returned affirmatively, recourse is made to the medicine-man, who carries out divination. The details of this method are described

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the custody of a widow. The father, the brother, or the maternal uncle of the widow may take her. In the words of my interpreter, each says, "It is better that you should take her," and at last someone says, "I will take her."

A chief of Ngalangi revealed the most important aspect of polygyny when he apologized for the fact that only five of his eleven wives were present. The chief was anxious to emphasize the fact that he had eleven wives, though six were at work in the fields.

When one considers the prestige of village chiefs, and further reflects on the desirability of maintaining this power within family groups, the institution of polygyny becomes more understandable. In addition there is the necessity of having women to cultivate the fields. A polygynous system does not necessarily cause domestic conflict, because each wife has her own hut, fireplace, and utensils. Custom obliges a chief to spend four nights in each hut in regular sequence.

A first and principal wife is not offended by the introduction of other wives, for these reduce her own labor and announce the fact that she is the principal wife of a wealthy man. When photographing the king of Ngalangi with his wives, I observed that he sent the principal wife from the group in order to adorn herself with a piece of cloth whose value was greater than that of the clothing worn by any of the others. Among the Vakuanyama it was noticeable that the principal wife wore a head-dress of clay with five horns; and in addition to this she had costly necklaces of ostrich-eggshell beads, also more of the coveted *omba* shells than were allowed to other wives. In this way the prestige of the first or great wife is preserved.

The persistence of custom, the force of education through suggestion in early years, and the power of social attitudes, are well illustrated by the survival of kinship terms and the classificatory system of relationships, with its marriage prohibitions and sanctions of an arbitrary kind. The strength of the mores and the fundamental nature of this system of relationship in determining marriage, descent, succession, and inheritance, are indicated by the fact that the system is unaltered after three centuries of contact with Europeans.

The rights of a mother's brother extend so far as a sale of his sister's children to redeem his own debts; and reciprocally he is responsible for the conduct of his sister's children, even to the extent of paying fines for the thefts they may commit. This prerogative and responsibility of the maternal uncle is fundamental, and around the trait cluster points of law and legal procedure.

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could be observed. Eventually I decided to work in the Bimbe area, in the extreme north-western corner of Umbundu country. The census[10] indicated that Bimbe had a smaller white population than any comparable area of Umbundu country, and people who knew it considered that it was one of the areas most likely to retain a relatively conservative social life.

In Bimbe I settled in the village of Epalanga in the chiefdom of Gumba. The advantage of Gumba lay in the conservatism for which its people were noted in other chiefdoms; its disadvantage lay in its proximity to the northern boundary of Umbundu speech and culture, which led me to collect some items of ethnographic information not typical of Umbundu country.[11] On the whole, I am satisfied that the people of Gumba were in the past as in the present Ovimbundu in both speech and way of life.[12]

Many of my discoveries were at first negative ones. I could not find any evidence that there was a double system of kinship groups actually in existence; the villages were not composed of agnatic kin; the chief seemed lacking in power. Nor was it easy to obtain detailed information about the past even from old men. There is little interest nowadays in history, nor are the old social institutions regarded, even by those who once participated in them, as being necessarily better than those of the present day. The reason for this attitude seems to lie in Umbundu social psychology with its readiness to accept European authority and values. Interesting as the motivations behind this attitude are, this 'cultural amnesia' caused me much disappointment. I found it much easier to get texts on the caravan trade, and on ceremonial practices and proverbs, than on the political and kinship systems. The inadequacies of the information I received on the political system may be explained by the fact that Gumba is on the fringe of the area tributary to the old kingdom of

[10] Of 1950.

[11] The payment of fines by a man to his dead wife's kin had been formerly practised in Gumba, and still is further north. It does not seem to have been known in living memory elsewhere in Umbundu country.

[12] The northern limit of Umbundu speech is now somewhere to the north of the administrative post of Cela. As there has not been substantial migration from the south, it is reasonable to assume that it is many years since the Gumba–Cela boundary was also the language boundary.

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[1874-1911]

631 764 funerals (though these burials could be undertaken by the cross-cousins of the deceased). When *vakwatjisoko* came to their partner-chiefdom for a funeral they had the right to steal small live-stock, such as chickens, or pigeons, but not cattle, goats, or [837] pigs. An *ukwatjisoko* could sleep with the wives of his *vakwatjisoko* partners without being sued for damages.[68]

631 [602] The ties of kinship and affinity crossed the boundaries of the sub-chiefdoms and even of the kingdoms.[69] The members [463] [574] of the three spirit-protected professions, blacksmithing, divining, and hunting recognized obligations of hospitality to co-professionals from other parts of the country.[70] Again the caravans were so large that they must have involved people [437] from many sub-chiefdoms, which presupposes a wide range of contacts.

182 It may be said that the picture given here is contradictory and inadequate. How can the existence of large kingdoms be reconciled to the extreme insecurity described by old men? How do the wealthy caravan organizers fit into the political system? What sort of politics were there in the kingdoms? It is not easy to answer these questions owing to the lack of evidence, and, probably, because the kingdoms were already in decline during the latter part of the rubber trade period. Indeed, the impression that accounts of the Ovimbundu in the nineteenth century give is that of adventure, battle, commerce, migration —a vigorous rather than a stable society.[71]

61 114 The kinship system is perhaps the field of Umbundu society which has aroused most interest among anthropologists. Childs and Hastings have written much that is interesting on the old double-descent grouping but as, with the kinship system, the form has been described rather than the functioning and it is

[68] Informants. The account in Childs, pp. 114–15 differs considerably. For this institution elsewhere in Angola see Estermann, 'Clans et alliances de clans', *Anthropos*, 1952.

[69] Childs, p. 54.

[70] Informants.

[71] Magyar describes the king and his courtiers as being extremely despotic towards the villagers, and states that their despotism depended on their having a standing military force called 'Sons of the Elephant' (pp. 278–80). Later accounts do not mention this, and Childs notes (p. 209) that at the height of the rubber trade it was more difficult for the kings to recruit armies for their wars.

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[Village of Epalanga]

cluster was much more autonomous *vis-à-vis* Sapapula than were the members of the Mbati-Mwehombo grouping through the more numerous and closer kin ties; yet it would be wrong to regard Ndjoleya's kin as isolated.[4] This greater autonomy was a matter of degree rather than kind.

With regard to geographical origin, it is evident that the population had been recruited from over quite a wide area. Of the 36 household heads 7 were born in Cela of whom 6 had come from Cela to Gumba, and 1 had been born in Cela, then come to Gumba, then moved to Menga and then returned to Gumba. 3 household heads had come from Utende to Gumba, and 2 had come from Namba. 12 had come to Epalanga from Cassongue. 7 household heads (including 2 who had subsequently lived in Cassongue) had at one time lived in Katembo (the village associated with Mbati). 1 householder was apparently born in Gumba but had no Katembo link. 2 household heads were from Ndjandju (one having lived in Cassongue after leaving Ndjandju, the other being the catechist) and 1 was from Chicunda. On the origins of 5 household heads I have no information.

My information on Epalanga suffers from a number of gaps. Some genealogical information collected was lost. Too frequently I neglected to ask if a particular relationship was patrilateral or matrilateral, nor did I enquire sufficiently as to whether particular marriages were between kinsfolk or not.

These deficiencies to some extent 'fit' the kinship system. A kinship tie may exist between two people which is significant in the social relations between them, yet they may not be sure as to whether it is patrilateral or matrilateral, or even as to what is the category of kinship involved. Thus a resident of Simbwyikoka's village told me one day that Simbwyikoka was his 'brother', some time later he was a brother-in-law, and after this again said that he was a 'brother'.

There is also confusion over pedigrees. The pedigree which Simbwyikoka gave me in December 1955 differed from the one that he gave me in April 1956. Two people who claim to be

[4] Ndjoleya once referred to himself as *Osikulu yimbo* (elder of the *imbo*) this being a case of *imbo* used for a cluster within a village. Ndjoleya's folk recognized Sapapula as being head of the village.

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[Village of Epalanga]

602 'close' kin may not be able to indicate the set of genealogical[5] links between them and will not be at all surprised or even interested by this; hence it is impossible to draw up a genealogy of Epalanga. I have attempted to show the very complicated 128 network of relationships by a series of charts—one big chart would have so many cross-cutting lines as to be largely unintelligible.

Three charts are given to illustrate particular sections of the mesh of kin and affinal ties. They are not intended as exhaustive records of the relationship of any one kinship core or of any single individual. Rather, they are intended to give a general impression of how the proliferation of the strands of kinship [621] and marriage brings about a complicated and formless patchwork in which everybody is included.

2. *Information on Household Heads*

601 List I. Residents of Epalanga as of December 1956. Female 621 household heads are indicated by a star against their names. The numbers are used on the map of the village (see p. 50).

Sapapula's Kinship Core

1. Aspirante, sister's son of Sapapula, son-in-law of Wayangu.
2. *Avilo, sister's daughter of Sapapula, 'sister' to Tjingonene (31).
3. Batista, son of Epalata (5) and husband of a sister of Kasosi (7).
4. Bernacio, son-in-law of Sapapula, 'son' to Kasosi (7).
5. Epalata, matrilateral cross-cousin of Sapapula.
6. Ernesto, sister's son of Sapapula, full brother of Aspirante (1) married to a daughter's daughter of Sasamela (see List II).
7. Kasosi, 'grandson' of Sapapula through being sister's son[6] to Wasuka (15). A 'son' to Guilherme and 'father' to Bernacio (4).

[5] Ovimbundu even traditionally seem to have been little interested in genealogies. (Information from Dr. G. M. Childs.)

[6] According to Umbundu kinship terminology, Wasuka being a matrilateral cross-cousin of Sapapula could call him 'father' and Kasosi could call his mother's brother's (Wasuka's) father 'grandfather'.

½ [cf. charts on pp. 91, 96, 97, in category 116-Analyst]

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wife of Ernesto (6). Patrilateral 'father' to Paula (24) and Saviel (11). Affinally related to Mwehombo, a 'sister' of whom he had married.

Wayangu, paternal half-brother of Mwehombo, resident at Epalanga till the end of 1955, wife's father to Aspirante (1) had married a sister (not clear whether own or classificatory) of Lusase.

3. *Kinship and marriage in the village setting*

The foregoing tabulated information and the charts indicate the two main principles of integration in Epalanga, as in other Umbundu villages, the settling of individuals near senior kinsmen and the existence of a number of intra-village marriage ties.

For a clearer outline of village structure to appear, it is necessary to give a brief sketch of the contemporary kinship system which will be discussed more thoroughly in later chapters. This is cognatic, with little distinction between patrilineal and matrilineal kin, the elementary family being the basic household unit, the individual being permitted to settle with any category of kin, and a high percentage of preferential marriages.[7]

The right of settling where one pleases, as 'the heart chooses', is recognized even in children. Minessi, the 7-year-old son of Gonçalve (18), used generally to eat at the household of his father's sister Paulina, the wife of Joaõ (20). Gonçalve said about this to me 'He is very fond of his father's sister.'

While the traditional norm by which a man lived in his father's village is still remembered, at least by older men, a

[7] Childs (p. 56) states that it is permitted to marry a cross-cousin on either side, a sister's daughter, and a father's sister. My informants generally agreed that the marriage with a father's sister was not and had not been permitted. Marriage is not permitted with 'true' kin of these categories. Padre Feltin, the superior of the Bimbe Catholic Mission who knew of the existence of these marriages, told me that very few Umbundu marriages came within the prohibited (a prohibition removable by a dispensation) degrees of kinship laid down by the Catholic Church (that is, up to, and including, third cousins). Such marriages in the past might have been with geographically as well as socially distant kin. Childs quotes a case of a marriage arranged, after the discovery of a kinship tie, between partners living as far apart as Ciyaka (Quiaca) and Ngalangi (Galangue).

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582 621 their marriage also fits a general pattern of Umbundu marriage, a choice made within a limited range joining together individuals of different kinship cores.

The multiplication of ties and their concentration within a neighbourhood by this means do not prevent a man from having kin and affines a day or two's journey away. It has earlier been indicated that the population of Epalanga was from quite a wide area. Yet the consequences of previous preferential marriages (thus Paulo and Saviel were related both patrilaterally and matrilaterally) and the trend towards the establishment of new marriage ties had created a complicated mesh of linkages that has been described within a not particularly stable village population, whose senior residents had been there for only ten years. To use again the anthropological metaphor of kinship as a network, the network can have odd strings running out quite a way, but in a village the different ties will be bound up in a knot.

602 166 The long-range ties (with such obvious exceptions as those with kin living in cities) are not the result of the range of kin spreading wider and wider under modern conditions. The evidence of pedigrees indicates that kinship and marriage links between individuals in, and actual migration to and from Gumba and Cassongue, Cela, and Namba, date back well into the nineteenth century. There is far less evidence of connections and migration between Gumba and areas to the south and east. This geographical aspect of social relations persists at the present day.

621 It has been indicated that the high proportion of preferential marriages creates a certain local stability, since many marriages are with people living close to. Yet the basic stability lies not so much in the relative stability of a local population, but in the pattern by which links of distant kinship are changed into marriage ties and new bonds are speedily established among the fortuitously assembled population of a new village.

4. *Headmen and Kinship Cores*

622 I now turn to the other principle of village integration, the settling of individuals near senior kinsmen. In the previous

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word 'otjitawila' is given by Dr. Childs[11] as being used for a section of the village; however, I have not found this word known locally.

It may be asked how typical Epalanga is of other villages. In size it is larger than usual, having 36 households. (The average number, using figures from 14 villages, is 18.36 households; the largest, Epalanga, had 36 and the smallest 5.) In structure other villages presented the same picture of ill-defined kinship cores held together by a network of kin and affinal ties, with village headmen emerging by a varying collection of claims, of which the most significant seemed to be a position as the principal focus of kinship ties.

5. *Kinsmen and the Choice of Residence*

When one asks a man why he has settled in a particular village, a common enough answer is that he has settled there because he has 'family' there. When asked who his 'family' (the Portuguese word *família* is used even by non-Portuguese speakers) is, he will give the name of a senior kinsman, or he may give more than one name. He may even give the name of somebody living outside the village. Thus in Epalanga when I asked Bartolomeu why he had settled there he replied that it was because of his mother's brother Lusase who was not an Epalanga resident. It was therefore not practicable for me, as I had at one time intended, to find which categories of kin are most likely to be settled with, by asking individuals in villages I censused, and obtaining percentages.

It is possible to indicate some of the 'pulls' which affect a choice of residence. In the traditional system, when a boy's father died he would settle with a father's brother. Nowadays, it is generally expected that he will settle with his mother's brother, this being the answer given by informants when asked where he will go. In practice, the pull of the mother's brother's household for a child does not seem to be so strong. In Epalanga, out of thirteen persons under 20 who had neither father nor mother resident in the village, only one was living with a mother's brother.

[11] See Childs, pp. 36–37.

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On the village level, however, the importance of the mother's brother tie and of the tie between matrilateral 'brothers' becomes very apparent. None of Sapapula's four sons had settled in Epalanga, and his only classificatory 'son' was Gonçalve, own son to Mwehombo, Sapapula's matrilateral 'brother'. Seven household heads were sister's sons of Sapapula. This trend for matrilateral ties to predominate is marked also in Katembo and Mbunga, but less evident at Belem. Indeed, 'neo-matrilinearity' as a principle of village structure may be a general and not simply a local feature of Umbundu society, since Mr. C. M. N. White[13] has found that the settlements of Ovimbundu within Northern Rhodesia are marked by a predominance of matrilateral ties. This is referable to the contemporary kinship system in which the father-son tie is predominantly a personal one, with a limited extension of attitudes to classificatory fathers, whereas a man's relation with a mother's brother seems little affected by the question of genealogical distance. Perhaps the relations between the group of agnatic kin were so closely tied to the old village structure that when it broke up it disintegrated also the wider agnatic ties. Yet at the same time such matrilineal institutions as matrilineal inheritance and the non-repayment of loans among matrikin have weakened or disappeared.

Running counter to this principle of settling in the village of a senior kinsman who is likely to belong to one's matrikin, is the principle of cross-cousin marriage. 'If you have married your cross-cousin when your son grows up he will see a cross-cousin here, a cross-cousin there, and so he will stay.' That is, a man will stay in his father's village not simply by virtue of the father-son tie but because he will be surrounded by kinsmen. The relation between cross-cousins is one of equality and solidarity, expressed in joking and in burial services. To say that one stays in a place because one has cross-cousins at hand is to indicate an ideal of equal relations with a circle of kinsmen rather than attachment to the following of an important kinsman.

These two principles co-exist in actual social life. A man will recognize and respect a number of senior kinsmen living in his

[13] In letters.

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neighbourhood and will explain his choice of residence by quoting the names of one or more of these; yet the weaving together of so many strands of kinship and affinity, ultimately through marriage links, is what gives the local population its relative degree of stability. It should be emphasized that the integration established within a village by the network of kinship and affinal ties is dependent on the integration created by the same amorphous network which runs through and beyond the sub-chiefdom. It is this network into which the individual is woven by multiple ties that absorbs the neo-matrilineal pull apparent to some degree in choice of residence and keeps the system essentially cognatic.

The use of the word *famílía* reflects this situation. A man may say of a particular senior kinsman 'He is my *famílía*', that is, my kinsman, my most important kinsman with whom I have settled, yet also he may say 'My *famílía* is in Cela', that is, the greater part of my kinsmen live in Cela. When Bartolomeu explained that he had settled where he did because of Lusase, he was perhaps combining the two kinds of references. He had settled in Gumba because he had a large number of kinsmen there among whom Lusase was pre-eminent. A man explaining the locality of his *famílía* in the wider sense will associate it with a particular sub-chiefdom—'My family is all in Menga'—when he is outside it; when he is in it he is more likely to refer to a particular village.

Although individuals living in a village may have come there through several kinship sources yet the majority of them will probably have some kinship or affinal tie with the traditional headman. This collection of individual ties does not provide the headman with a body of followers, nor is having a large number of dependants a value of contemporary Umbundu culture. If it were felt that the best thing to be in life is the patron of a body of kinsmen and followers, headmanship would survive as a predominant influence in local life despite the collapse of its political and legal responsibilities. In fact not even old men feel this way.

The idea of the village as a corporate group with a jural and political personality rather than a residential unit has not survived the break-up of agnatic solidarity, the disappearance

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gramophone in a town rather than at a trader's near his home village. Most of the money paid for purchases at the stores is money raised by selling crops or livestock. Through labour migration there is, however, some transmission of skills; it is easy to find bricklayers and carpenters of a sort even in Gumba.

Money, rather than barter, is the principal means of exchange among the villages in the selling of local products, and even of meat from pigs. Payment for labour service, such as assistance in house-building and in bringing in maize, is made in beer, except among Protestants who substitute a meal. There is also a custom by which a household which finds, probably at the end of the dry season, that it has not enough maize will make beer to exchange on a particular day for maize.

Ties of kinship and friendship have some economic significance. A kinsman will help with house-building without expecting payment; likewise a man who has a cleared field which he does not want to use may sell it for 200 escudos (£2. 10s.) but would give it free to a kinsman. A man may make a charge for lending his bicycle, though this varies with individuals; he certainly would not do so if it were lent to a friend. Loans between kinsmen should be repaid, and a tailor with a sewing-machine will make the same charges to relatives as to non-kinsmen.

There are few occasions for groups to work together. The unit of consumption and production is the domestic family. Even here, the husband, each wife, and the adolescents have their own fields, though a man may help his wife. Such other occasions of mutual help, in clearing a field, which may occur between friends or kinsmen, will only bring a few, often only two of them.

The Ovimbundu I knew were (with exceptions) not avaricious or grasping; thus, beer might be given to people who have not actually worked in house-building parties. It is regarded as a moral duty to pay one's monetary debts as soon as possible. On various occasions I lent money to people who were pressed and I received back all the money lent. Borrowers insisted that borrowings should be written down, and that the paper on which it was written should be given to them when they paid, or destroyed. Making money and being rich are regarded with

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unambiguous approval, though there is a certain undertone suggesting cunning in the verb *oku lunguka* (to be shrewd) used about prosperous people. The old suspicion of sorcery attaching to people who were more successful farmers than their neighbours[6] seems to have disappeared. While a prosperous villager would be expected to lend money to a poorer kinsman (provided the latter was not known as a bad debtor) yet, the situation which occurs in other parts of Africa, where, as Dr. V. W. Turner notes of the Mwinilunga Ndembu, prosperous Africans 'find themselves increasingly embarrassed by the demands of their kin for presents in cash and kind'[7], would not arise among the Ovimbundu, who would regard such demands as being unjustified, even outrageous.

Wealthy Ovimbundu may spend some of their wealth on clothing and on drink. Cattle-buying has been noted as a form of capital investment and the same term may be used of small stock buying. Another way of disposing of money is by building a house of bricks with the assistance of a bricklayer. A plough may be, but rarely is, bought by two men joining together to pool their money. Generally speaking, the agricultural technology of the Ovimbundu has been little changed since 1911 except for the spread of the techniques of coffee-growing.

It has been noted earlier that the Ovimbundu play an important part in the economic life of Angola both as cultivators and labourers. In this chapter an attempt has been made to show how at the local level it is the cultivation of cash crops, rather than migration for wage labour, which incorporates villagers into the commercial economy of modern Angola. The main source of money in rural areas is the trader's store, which is also the main recipient of money, apart from the administration. While trade both between Ovimbundu and between Ovimbundu and other tribes survives on a minor scale, the social institutions associated with the rubber trade, the large caravans, the non-repayable loans within the matrilineal group, and the obligations of wealthy traders to assist their kin, have disappeared. The contemporary social structure with the

[6] Childs, pp. 106–8.

[7] V. W. Turner, op. cit., p. 135.

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with anthropological knowledge and interests, Dr. Daniel A. Hastings and Dr. Gladwyn Murray Childs, have written on Umbundu kinship.[3] Mr. Hambly's main interest was in material culture and the conditions of his fieldwork were not such as to give him much evidence on the kinship system.[4] Both Dr. Hastings and Dr. Childs recognized the central importance of kinship in Umbundu social life, but have outlined the kinship ties and kinship groups rather than given a detailed analysis.

602 Mr. Hambly states that 'The phrase *Epata Lia Tate* (or *Oluse*) means "family of my father" and includes all relatives on the father's side. The words *Epata Lia Mai* (or *Oluina*) mean "family of my mother".'[5] This could mean that the Umbundu kinship system is bilateral. He states that inheritance is matrilineal and marriage virilocal, a situation consistent with such a matrilineal kinship system as that of the Bakongo.[6]

613 622 Dr. Hastings, whose thesis was completed the year before the publication of Hambly's book, makes it clear that there are two sets of kin groups. 'Over each village is a ruling elder who is the head of the kinship group of that village since all who reside in the village are generally related to him and to each other patrilineally. This elder, greatly revered, is considered the patriarch of that local group. Residence being patrilocal, [59] the office of an elder is hereditary through the male line.'[7] He 613 then goes on to contrast with this, 'the matrilineal sib to which each member is linked, though he may be living in a village away from his sib group.'[8] This group is a clearly defined

[3] Works cited in footnotes to Chapter I. There is a typescript of Hastings's thesis in the library of the International African Institute, London.

[4] Mr. Hambly spent five months in the country, and used as his interpreter and main informant an English-speaking Otjimbundu. He seems simply to have visited villages without living in them. Dr. Childs and Dr. Hastings had both spent several years as 'bush' missionaries. Dr. Childs had actually taken over from Dr. Hastings work in the area to the north-west of Bailundo in the direction of Bimbe, and had subsequently obtained information in Cassongue. He later obtained a good deal of material from African pastors, teachers and schoolboys.

[5] Hambly, pp. 191–2.

[6] For the Bakongo see the discussion by A. I. Richards, in Radcliffe-Brown and Forde, pp. 213–21. Anthropologists have more than once suggested to the author that the Umbundu system was not of the 'double-descent' category but some combination of virilocal marriage and matrilineal descent.

[7] Hastings, p. 16.

[8] Ibid.

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601 The reciprocal of *tate* and *mai* is *omola* (child), usually with the possessive pronoun. *Nungulu* is used for the first-born son, and *kwasula* for the youngest. The reciprocal of both *sekulu* and *apahai* is *otjimumba*. Elder sibling is *huva*, younger sibling is *mandja*, both used with the possessive pronouns. *Kota* seems to have meant formerly the eldest sibling but it is now equivalent to *huva*. *Mukai* is sister, man speaking, and *mume* is brother, woman speaking.

Epalume, pl. *apalume*, cross-cousin
K'oluse patrilateral cross-cousin
K'oluina matrilateral cross-cousin

Makulu[13] is used for 'grandfather' and very often for grandmother, though for the latter there is a separate term, *inakulu*; the reciprocal is *onekulu*.

Nawa brother-in-law, sister-in-law. Extended to all siblings, real or classificatory, of a wife, the husband of any female sibling, and the siblings of such a husband.

Ndatembo father-in-law, mother-in-law;
son-in-law, daughter-in-law.
Ndatembo is used only in reference; to address these affines one uses *tate* and *mai*.

Tjikwelume[14] sister's daughter's husband, sometimes father's sister's husband. The wife's mother's brother may be regarded as a mother's brother or as a *ndatembo*.

[602] *Tjisoko* (funeral friend) is used as a kinship term both in address and reference. This is an abbreviation of the more correct *ukwatjisoko*, of which the plural is *vakwatjisoko*.

The term for wife is *ukai* (woman) or *ufeko* (girl), the latter being perhaps more frequent. *Vey'yange* (my husband) is used as a term of reference by a woman rather than *ulume* (man, husband). Husband and wife would address each other by name or '*a ukuetu*' (O friend). If an individual is both an affine and a kinsman the affinal ties take precedence.

[13] Elsewhere *Sekulu* is used for 'grandfather'.
[14] Alfeno Alves, Vol. I, p. 448, gives *Tjikwelume* as sister's son.

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Osanto or *osiala* (namesake) is used as a kinship term, both in address and as reference.

Oluse and *oluina*, which were formerly the words for the agnatic and matrilineal kin group, now mean the patrikin, that is, all to whom one is paternally related, and the matrikin, all to whom one is matrilaterally related. A man, describing a particular tie, may say that it is 'in the matrikin of my father', that is, the relative is a matrilineal kinsman of his father. The terms *onele yohondji* ('the side of the bow') and *onele yohumba* ('the side of the basket') are equivalents of *oluse* and *oluina*.[18] The term *epata* may be used in a general sense for kin but it has very often a primary reference to the matrikin. *Familia* (from the Portuguese) means kin in general but it may mean 'kinsman' with reference to a single individual: 'So-and-so is (or is not) my *Familia*.' *Ngandi* (which also means 'So-and-so,' equivalent to the Portuguese *fulano*) means kinsman and *usitwe* is kinship.

The use of Portuguese terms is now frequent even among those who do not speak Portuguese. The terms most frequently taken into the Umbundu language are *mano* which is used to mean 'elder brother,' and *mana* which is used to mean 'elder sister,' both terms being used by either sex, *primo* (feminine *prima*), cousin, which is used as an equivalent of *epalume* (cross-cousin), *tio* (uncle), which is now used more frequently than *sekulu*, and *cunhado* (feminine *cunhada*) brother-in-law or sister-in-law, used in the same way as is *nawa*. Ovimbundu villagers talking Portuguese will apply the Portuguese terms in Umbundu style. Thus *irmaõ* (brother) will be used as an equivalent of *mandja* (younger sibling of either sex), and *irmaõ mais velho* (older brother) will be used as an equivalent of *kuwa* (elder sibling of either sex). Similarly *tia* (aunt) will be used as an equivalent of *apahai*.

The rules about which term may be used in a particular defined relationship (e.g. my wife's mother's brother) are not clearly and exclusively defined. What is more surprising is that a man may not be certain what is the category in which he should class a kinsman with whom he has frequent contacts. Thus Paulo, the elder of the school at Epalanga, often played

[18] As noted previously in the references to Chapter I these terms do not seem to have referred to descent groups.

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[1874-1911]

slave. Once ransomed a boy could not be sold again. If, however, the father was displeased with his son's behaviour he could refuse to ransom him. When a man died, his adolescent sons would go to the household of a classificatory father and the children who did not yet 'have sense' would go with the widow to her kin, returning to their agnatic kin when they were older.

4. *Analysis of the Old Kinship System*

The ethnography of the Ovimbundu does show that there existed a double-descent kinship system, each individual belonging to both a local patrilineal group, and a dispersed matrilineal group, in which movable property is inherited. So great has been the impact of social change that not only have these groups disappeared but it is practically impossible to gain additional information on them by direct questions about their nature and functions. The information on kinship norms does give a somewhat clearer picture.

Within the village there was a very strong emphasis on the unity and solidarity of the men of the village. The men's house was the main social centre of the village where the men ate, received guests, and listened to cases. It was about it rather than about the person of the headman that ritual clustered.[20] The elementary family was not the unit of domestic consumption, and it is clear, from the taboos regarding contact with women kin, and the evidence as to the social life of the man's house that there was little recreational contact between the sexes. The concept of *ondjamba*[21] shows that the elementary family of husband, wife, and children, was morally and ritually significant, but many of the educational, nutritive, and recreational functions frequently associated with it were here attached to the men's house.

The strength of the agnatic ties in this society seems to have lain in the solidarity of the men of the village rather than in the patriarchal authority of fathers over sons. A son was economically independent of his father since he could trade on his own while his father was still living; the most powerful social sanction in the hands of kinsmen, that of being sold as a slave, was

[20] For these rituals see Hastings, pp. 73–76, and Childs, p. 39.
[21] *Ondjamba* will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

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The rules about avoidance at night are still kept. The prohibitions on a man borrowing his father's clothes and sleeping in the same room as his father seem to survive. The prohibition on a child speaking the name of his father or mother reported by Childs is not, and was not formerly, found in this area. It is, however, wrong for a child to address his parents by name.

Children begin to work in the fields when they are about six. Occasionally boys of 10 to 11 go to the coffee fields for two months work, but usually boys do not go out to work until they are about 14 or 15.

A boy going out to work should ask his father's permission to go though this is not always done. Returning from work whether contract labour or voluntary work a boy should bring presents to his relatives. He would be expected to give something, say, a jacket, to his father, and a cloth to his mother, on returning from voluntary work and a shirt to his father on coming back from contract labour. These gifts should be made in kind. Money lent from son to father should be repaid, though it is wrong for a son to enforce payment by appealing to the post for policemen. A father may give money to his son for bride-wealth, and may suggest a choice of bride. He cannot constrain, nor could he in the past, his son and daughter to a marriage they do not wish.

A man cannot be said to have real authority over his grown sons. The stated norm is that a man's sons stay in the same village till he dies. He has no power to make them do so, and they are not condemned by public opinion if they live elsewhere. A man's attitude to classificatory 'fathers' is determined by the age, status, and personalities of those involved, rather than by jural rights and obligations. I have found men unable to tell me what had become of their own brothers' children.

Formerly when the father of an adolescent boy died he would join the household of a father's brother. Nowadays this would be much less likely, as it is common for such a boy to settle with other categories of kin, notably siblings and maternal kinsfolk. A man is free to stay with his brothers if he wishes, or to leave them.

While the tie between full brothers is held to be the strongest, as regards classificatory brothers there seems to be a slight

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leaning towards matrilateral rather than patrilateral brothers. The classificatory kinship terminology, and the lack of genealogies and kinship groups, means that a man knows a great many classificatory brothers living in his neighbourhood of whom he vaguely recognizes some as 'close' others as 'distant', but with whom his relations are not especially significant. A boy or girl who loses his or her parents is fairly likely, judging from the evidence of Epalanga households, to settle with a full- or half-brother or sister.

Formerly, owing to virilocal marriage, a sister was geographically separated from her brother, and even if widowed or divorced would not necessarily return to his village, but might go to her mother's brother.[24] With this geographical separation went a situation of possible conflict, since the brother could sell his sister's children to recoup his own debts, and the shadow of sorcery fears seems to have touched this relationship.[25] The suppression of the rubber and slave trades and the subsequent disintegration of the kinship groups have removed the economic pressures which made for conflict between matrilineal kin and the residence rules which divided people locally into groups of agnates and their wives. The brother-sister tie has therefore changed its content, since it is released from the heavy pressures formerly active in the matrilineal kin groups.

It would be wrong to produce any such generalization as 'a woman must always be under the guardianship of a male relative'. A woman who is widowed or divorced or whose husband is away working will tend, however, to develop a particular link with the male head of some household, her own kinsman usually, except in the case of a labour migrant's wife, when it may be a kinsman of her husband. Thus in Epalanga, Augusto (25) aided the household of his absent full brother Julio (29).

Aid is most likely to be given to a kinsman's wife when the two households are close together. The underlying idea seems to be to keep the kinsman's household together rather than any duty of aiding an affine. For a widow or divorced woman or the

[24] Childs, pp. 25–37.

[25] H. W. Nevinson (*A Modern Slavery*) gives a complicated story which suggests this possibility (p. 101).

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wife of a 'lost' labour migrant the tie with the brother or other kinsman will be more important, though the degree to which there is contact between the two households will vary.

It would seem that the present significance of the brother-sister tie is due to the frequency and likelihood of husbands being away from villages as labourers. The strength of this tie gives added significance to the mother's brother—sister's son tie.

A sister's son traditionally inherited his mother's brother's movable property, and during his lifetime might borrow from him without need of repayment. Against this, the mother's brother had the right to sell his sister's son as a slave and it was he who was considered most likely, both traditionally and at the present day, to practise sorcery against his sister's son. My informants were divided as to whether the sister's son can practise sorcery against his mother's brother. However, it was stated by Hastings[26] and by my informants that sorcery was only practised between matrilineal kin. It is not easy to see how in the past the relationship between a man and his mother's brothers operated—to what extent a man had particular expectations and obligations to one particular mother's brother rather than to the whole set of senior matrilineal kin.

At the present time the content of the relationship between mother's brother and sister's son seems very fluid, depending on age and personal compatibility. An important difference arises between one's attitude to 'mother's brothers' and to 'fathers'. There is no strong tie with one's mother's own brother, as there is with one's own father; on the other hand, a boy whose father has died is regarded as much more likely to go to the house of a classificatory mother's brother than to the house of a classificatory father, although, as has been noted, children and adolescents may settle with kin of other categories.

Traditionally the relationship between a man and his wife's brother was distant and reserved, the two men being forbidden to eat together or joke. Nowadays the relations between a man and his wife's full or half brother are often very friendly; quite often when one finds two households close together they turn out to belong to men related in this way.

A brother-in-law is not regarded as a kinsman—he does not

[26] Hastings, p. 87.

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6. *Descent, Inheritance and Succession*

There is little interest in genealogical detail among contemporary Ovimbundu, which is not surprising since there exists no system of descent groups in which the position of the individual may be genealogically defined nor does affiliation to a particular line of descent give status *vis-à-vis* people of less eminent descent. Pedigrees are traced (in either line) for only two to four ascending generations though one man I met could name ancestors for nine ascending generations.

Despite this vagueness and lack of interest in the articulation of relationships, Ovimbundu will say that such-and-such a kinsman is 'close' and such-and-such is 'distant' even though they cannot fit this into a genealogical framework. 'Closeness' and 'nearness' are not simply used to refer to geographical proximity or social co-operation, since there may be much mutual assistance between kinsmen who are 'distant'. One might speak of a blurred edge of kinship not clearly defined in categories of kin but not non-kinsmen. A man may speak of somebody on this 'blurred edge' thus: 'He must be a kinsman but I don't know how.' Similarly the *vakwatjisoko*[1] are a class of people who are not definitely kin, and not non-kin.

There is little formalized distinction between patrikin and matrikin. There is a certain matrilateral pull in the choice of residence, a man being, as has been noted, more likely to settle with a mother's brother than with a 'father'. I had the impression that a man is more likely to settle with a matrilateral 'brother' than with a patrilateral one, but it would be very difficult to establish this by quantitative methods owing to the complexity of the factors affecting residence. As a man tends to settle where he has a number of kin rather than in the shelter of one particular kinsman, this trend does not lead to the formation of matrilineal clusters of kin. The majority of informants still consider that sorcery can only be practised among matrilineal kin but for various reasons it may be said that the fear of sorcery is not significant in kinship relations.[88]

[88] It may be suggested that the disappearance of the matrilineal groups which imposed a co-operation involving exacting demands has been paralleled by the decline of sorcery, the mystical reflection of underlying tensions. How is the fact that several informants told me that sorcery had declined since the days of the

[1] [i.e., funeral friends -- Analyst]

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Inheritance of movable goods was traditionally entirely matrilineal. Today informants are confused as to what ought to be done. Inquiry about particular cases will reveal that often no movable property was left by the deceased, it having been used to pay for such expenses of the illness and funeral as the purchase of medicines and the buying of animals to be slaughtered at the feasts.

Where there is movable property, the transmission of it to the heirs is carried out in a rather informalized way, as so often happens in Umbundu social activities. The actual division of property is undertaken by a kinsman of the deceased. This should apparently be the most senior kinsman. It may be a cross-cousin or 'brother' or a sister's son.[29] How it is decided who is the senior kinsman, and who are fitted to participate in the share-out is not very clear. Nor does it seem that there is any effective device against the sharer-out giving himself the lion's share, except the general pressures and reciprocities of kinship. The principle accepted in the share-out is that inheritance should be a reflection of the relations which existed with the dead man, and also be a reward of funeral services. Nothing is kept for kin who are away working, and a son who did not keep in contact with his father would be omitted from the share-out.

By inheritance a man can increase his small stock of possessions. He is unlikely to receive anything much in the way of money, and since there is no land shortage, and, as yet, little in the way of valuable immovable property such as brick

rubber trade to be reconciled with the statement by Childs that fear of sorcery was increasing (Childs pp. 57–58)? I suggest that the final disintegration of the old kinship groups may have been marked by particularly sharp social tensions, but that once these groups were in fact dissolved and a new form of social relations established the fear of sorcery may have declined. It should also be remembered that as indicated in Chapter V the present-day economic values of the Ovimbundu do not lead to expectations that a prosperous individual will share his wealth with poorer kinsmen, as was the case in the time of the rubber trade. Hence accusations of sorcery based on disappointed expectations of generosity are unlikely to arise.

Another aspect of the question which cannot be explored here in detail is the lack of agreement on the causality of classes of happenings or individual events. Thus one informant will say that a woman's pains in childbirth are due to sorcerers among her kin, another will say that they are caused by God (as we would say, are natural).

[29] Hambly, pp. 195–200.

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houses, coffee plants and so on there is little likelihood of disputes arising about the inheritance of land claims. A woman's property should be given to her sisters, after her children have had their cut. In one case a man inherited his sister's debts but allowed her children to inherit her property, 'lest they be sad'. A wife's fields return to her husband.

Inheritance is then a process by which the relations of certain kin, both sons and sister's sons, with the deceased are recognized by the transmission of his property. As with other aspects of Umbundu kinship, while the existence of the kinship tie provides the basis on which to found a relationship, its content is determined by the nature of the contacts between the individuals involved and the services given.

Although there is a definite tendency for men of chiefly stock to have longer pedigrees than other individuals there is no chiefly genealogy. When Paulo, the elder of the school of Epalanga, told me that had he not been blind he might have been chief of Gumba, he quoted the names of four chiefs to whom he was related. The chieftancy is not tied to a lineage, but can be held by any individual who can claim links with a former chief or chiefs. People 'of the blood of the chiefs' in no sense form a differentiated group of aristocrats significant in social life.

In similar fashion membership of the spirit-linked professions and of certain cults seems to have been a matter of succession of one individual to the role of another.[30] Membership of the hunting and smithing professions descended patrilineally, but if a hunter or smith had no son his position could be succeeded to by a daughter's son.[31]

7. *Kinship in a Changing Society*

From this, and from other chapters, a picture of Umbundu kinship may emerge as something so blurred, confused, and confusing, as hardly to merit the term 'kinship system', yet at

[30] I.e. rather than admission to a corporate group of hunters. A man can inherit his father's hunting spirit before the latter's death; in Epalanga Batista had received the hunting spirit of his father Epalata.

[31] My informants were not agreed as to whether a sister's son could inherit in default of a son.

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602 183 the same time clearly an important part of social life. Kinship norms are confused, as is the correct term to use in a particular relationship. Ritual and jural sanctions are lacking, as are institutions based on the regular co-operation of groups of kinsmen. Yet a man likes to live with kinsfolk and there is a tendency for kin to cluster together in a neighbourhood.

602 621 By the very facts, that so many of a man's neighbours are his kinsmen, and that there is very little marked differentiation between the behaviour towards different categories of kin, kinship is robbed of any great specificity of content. It might be said that it is the quantity rather than the quality of kinship ties that makes kinship significant in establishing a 'sense of community' in a neighbourhood, in that the multiplicity of local kin ties creates some identification between a man's range of kin and his neighbourhood. At the same time a kinship tie provides a basis on which a closer relationship may be built by reciprocal services. It appears that the inheritance of property 602 428 recognizes kinship in this way by recognizing claims not on the basis of strict genealogical proximity but on the quality of the relationship.

128 A discussion of marriage and the household must be left to the next chapter. The outline given of the present kinship system is sufficiently clear to begin an examination of the reasons for the changes. This must rely to some extent on speculation, owing to a lack of information on the actual working of the kinship system while it was in transition to its present form.

613 178 The key change is the disappearance of the kinship groups. These, it seems, disappeared because of their high degree of dependence on the particular type of economy existing before 1911. It has already been argued that the distinction between the patrikin and the matrikin is an attempt to isolate economic claims and conflicts from village and political relationships, and that the giving of loans without right of repayment within the matrikin was called for by a trading system in which credit played an important part. With the end of the trade the wealth passing through Umbundu hands declined sharply, and there was neither need for funds to meet trading losses nor currency to provide them. A man obtained money either by growing crops

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helped by his wife and children or by going out to work. Neither means of making money involves regular co-operation with a body of kinsmen. The occasional co-operation needed in situations of financial crisis or mutual help for some particular job can be provided by those of a man's numerous kinsfolk with whom he has established ties of amity above the mere recognition of relationship.[33]

The disappearance of the matrilineal group was a logical consequence of the disappearance of its *raison d'être*. With the disappearance of the matrilineal group, there was no longer any need to preserve the distinctive nature of the agnatic group. It is quite possible to suppose that the village might have preserved its patrilineal base if other factors had come into play. Such possible factors would be a shortage of land, danger of attack from enemies, or the use by the headman of his political power to keep control over his patrikin.[33]

A question of some significance arises from the differences of attitude to a man's 'fathers' and to his 'mother's brothers' which has been noted earlier on. From the literature it might seem that the link between agnates was very strong, and that it is surprising that it should have broken up so completely. It may be suggested that the unity of agnatic kin was expressed in the idiom of relations between villagers rather than of relations between kin, and that within the village there was not necessarily much greater solidarity between siblings than between distant agnates. The solidarity of paternal siblings was then, granting this hypothesis, a reflection of the wider solidarity of the village. When the village disintegrated the close ties between brothers disintegrated also.

The unity of the matrikin was perhaps expressed to a much greater degree in a kinship idiom.[34] This is perhaps one of the

[33] The amount of aid an individual can mobilize in case of need depends to a very great extent on personal factors. It should be emphasized that it is personal co-operation over a number of years rather than any genealogical nearness that inclines a man to be helpful. While helpfulness to kinsfolk is a norm of Umbundu ethics, it is possible in practice to provide excuses for non-co-operation.

[33] The rapid disintegration of the indigenous system of authority after the middle thirties may reasonably be linked with the decay of agnatic ties of residence.

[34] 'When an Ocimbundu speaks of his family (*epata*) in the sense of a large and widespread organization with a recognized head in some elder, it is generally his *olaku* to which he refers.' Childs, p. 44.

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178 reasons behind the 'neo-matrilineal' pull in residence, the other being the new relationship between brother and sister, with its consequent influence on the mother's brother—sister's son relationship.

In this chapter on the kinship system the preferential marriages have not been discussed at length, but without them the contemporary kinship system would not tie up as it does with the local organization. The next chapter complements this one.

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582 Another explanation, which I have quoted earlier, is that if one marries a kinswoman, one's children, when they grow up, will not leave, since they see 'a cross-cousin here, a cross-cousin there'.

All these reasons are no doubt to some extent valid. There are no fixed limits for bridewealth and no doubt some bride-
[583] wealths paid in a cross-cousin marriage are higher than some paid in marriages between non-kin; however, it is generally held that a kinsman is less demanding over the question of bridewealth than a non-kinsman. There is some evidence that cross-cousin marriages are more stable than those with non-kinsfolk. The high proportion of cross-cousin marriages naturally leads to an individual tending, when considering the possibility of marriage, to think of his female kin, even though there is no individual girl whom he is expected to marry.

768 The custom of fining a man whose wife had died was noted among the Ovimbundu a hundred years ago by Ladislau Magyar; in recent times it seems to have disappeared from most of Umbundu country. Its survival in Gumba up to the last few years may be related to the links existing between Gumba and the northern non-Umbundu peoples, who apparently practise it to this day.

582 The last of the explanations given may be translated thus, 'Cross-cousin marriage means that the children will have the same individuals as both patrikin and matrikin. They will remain in their father's village, where he is living with his kin and will not be inclined to return to their matrikin.' This line of argument comes close to the 'observer' explanation previously offered that preferential marriage greatly increases the number of social relations within a neighbourhood. The Ovimbundu do not see this aspect of cross-cousin marriage, and this fits their
[829] lack of any 'model' of their own society as a whole, which is in turn a consequence of the rapid social change they have experienced. However, they do see cross-cousin marriage as increasing the number of ties which exist for an individual in his village and neighbourhood.

602 The diagrams and information contained in Chapter IV have already indicated how individuals are linked by marriage ties, and in Chapter VII the way in which brothers-in-law may

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live next to each other has been noted as a new development, impossible in the days of agnatic residence groups. It will be remembered how in listing the kinship cores of Epalanga, Joaõ was placed among the kin of Mbati and Mwehombo with which he had become associated through his marriage to Paulina, although he had come to Epalanga through his relationship to Sapapula.

I have earlier described the preferential marriages as giving 'stability' to the kinship system and as providing a limit on the spread of affinal ties. In what does this stability consist, and how far is there really a limit?

The stability given by the marriage system is not the sum of the stability of individual marriages. Nor is it more than partially a local stability; marriages are not limited to a small geographical range, although the network of marriages between kin is very significant in local relations and even 'long distance' marriages which renew links with Cela and Namba reflect long-standing contacts of marriage and migration. The stability lies in the 'pattern' by which new preferential marriages are constantly being made.

The socio-geographical range over which wives are found does not differ appreciably from the socio-geographical range over which kin ties exist, which, as has been noted in Chapter IV[3], links Gumba strongly to Cassongue, Cela, and Namba, rather than with areas to the south and east, and this range does not seem to be expanding under modern conditions. Migrant labourers do not return to Gumba with wives from other areas. The only definite exception I knew to this rule was provided by Sawaisi, a traditional village headman, who had travelled on the caravans and had subsequently been a soldier. Stationed at Luanda he had there married three Kimbundu women with whom he returned to Gumba, where they were still living with him during my stay.

The preference for kinship marriage is not a limiting factor on marriage in the way that a rule of endogamy is, since a number of marriages occur with non-kinswomen. It is a limiting factor in the way that it gives an additional significance to kinship, since in the choice of a wife the distinction between kin and

[3] See p. 58.

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non-kin, which is not marked in ordinary social life, becomes important. Kinship marriages transform 'distant' kin ties into close affinal ties which will in the next generation become close kinship ties.

It is extremely difficult even to guess how this system operated in the past. Did the high rate of preferential marriages have the same function formerly as now? Or has the institution continued in being, while its function relative to the total society has changed? The testimony of that informant of Dr. Childs who told him that formerly all marriages were kin marriages and that patrilaterally one only married on 'the side of the basket' and matrilaterally only on 'the side of the bow'[4] has led Professor Barnes to suggest[5] that the preferential marriages functioned as links between descent groups. Both Dr. Childs and myself, however, have found that 'the side of the bow' and 'the side of the basket' are simply synonyms for '*oluse*' and '*oluina*'.[6] Moreover, my informants did not confirm his statement since they denied the right of marriage with a father's sister, and the quantitative information shows that even in the past some marriages were with non-kinswomen, and that others were with categories of kin theoretically forbidden, so that, then as now, the preferential marriages were with distant kinswomen rather than with a specific category of kin.

If, however, kinship marriages in the past operated as they now do, it is difficult to see their relation to the patrilineal and matrilineal groups. A clue to a solution is surely given by the custom of 'cutting the blood', which destroyed kinship to begin affinity. Marriages were arranged, it may be suggested, with those people who were still just kin, and who probably often were also geographically as well as socially distant so that the number of ties outside the sub-chiefdom might be increased, a matter of importance for long-distance traders. Later, Portuguese rule made travel no longer dependent on such long range contacts. Meanwhile the disintegration of the agnatic residence

[4] The exact words are 'Formerly people never married unless they were related, that is to say unless they touched the blood together. If in the mother's kin (*k'oluina*) only on the side of the bow (i.e. male line). If in the father's kin (*k'oluse*) only on the side of the basket (i.e. female line)'. See Childs, pp. 53–56.

[5] Review of Childs in *Man*, 1950, pp. 126–8.

[6] Dr. Childs was speaking to me apropos of Barnes's interpretation.

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groups began to make the socio-geographical function of these marriages no longer the renewal of ties with distant kin but the holding together of the local community no longer held in the firm framework of the old local organization.

Several explanations can therefore be given for preferential marriages. From the point of view of the man making such a marriage there are economic advantages in the probably lower bridewealth and, formerly, the avoidance of the fine payable on the death of a non-related wife. The marriage itself is more likely to be stable, and a man's children are more likely to stay with him if they have other kin close at hand. The local mobility of the Ovimbundu to some extent assists marital stability, since a bride arriving in a village may well find there other kin than her husband and his relatives, and may find such relatives helpful to her.

From an observer's view-point, preferential marriage is important on the village and neighbourhood level by multiplying social links within them. Its importance for the kinship system lies in its giving significance to the distinction between kin and non-kin and in keeping kinsfolk together without either localization of kinship groups or villages with strong headmen.

2. *Husband, Wife, and Household*

Traditionally the Ovimbundu lived chastely till marriage, and there existed sanctions in the form of fines, alterations in the marriage ceremony, and mystically caused illness, against unchastity.[7] The force of these sanctions has weakened in modern times;[8] however, many Ovimbundu remain chaste until marriage.

The age of marriage is about twenty-two for a man, and about eighteen for a girl. In Gumba there is some tendency to marry younger at about 16–17. Villagers in Epalanga ascribed this to contract labour, that is, to the necessity of a contract labourer having to have someone to cook for him. This is a point which will be considered later in reference to the wife's services to her

[7] Hastings, p. 181. Childs, p. 113.

[8] Childs, loc. cit., and fieldwork.

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This strong pull towards the mother's brother is, however, marked on the level of village relationships as has been already noted. It is possible that with regard to co-operation on the domestic plane the tie between a man and his wife's full or half siblings is stronger than that with his sister's children. This argument would claim that the tie created by marriage between a man and his wife's full or half siblings is one of the strongest in the Umbundu social structure, and as a further proof (albeit not quantitively assessed) may be quoted the frequency with which two households close together turn out to belong to a man and his wife's brother.

In the first section of this chapter it was argued that the high rate of preferential marriages greatly increased the number of social ties between individuals in a neighbourhood, and brought a renewal of ties with distant kin. In this section various aspects of the relationship between husband and wife have been examined. Husband and wife co-operate economically and outside working hours may pass their evenings together. In a dispute taken to the post a man is likely to take his wife as a witness. Mystically sanctioned obligations do exist between husband and wife. While the elementary family is the main domestic type, households headed by women are also found and there is a certain amount of mobility of children between households. The tie of a man with his wife's siblings, particularly when they are children, is significant for the domestic organization of households.

Marriage is indeed the pivotal institution of the Umbundu kinship system. The preferential marriages do not link descent groups to one another; rather they bring about the local concentration of kin which makes out of many vague and insecure links a strongly-woven community in which both husband and wife can live with relatives near at hand.

Of the personal relationship between husband and wife it would be impossible to say as an anthropologist has of another African people, 'Here people looked for little in marriage. A man would turn to his sixteenth cousin twice removed before he turned to his wife.'[22] A man shares with his wife his work and leisure, is linked to her by mystical obligations which are not

[22] Eleanor Smith Bowen, *Return to Laughter*, London, 1954, p. 117.

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ended by her death, and can rely on her testimony in a case. Even though adultery is reputedly frequent it is deplored and, as will be shown in a discussion of disputes, a man's hostility to another will be ascribed to thwarted lust for the latter's wife. The conjugal bond is the closest social relation that can exist between adults, and therefore the very type of personal enmity is provided by the adulterer or would-be adulterer.

I am here emphasizing the factors which strengthen the conjugal bond; at the end of the previous chapter I emphasized the strength which the brother-sister tie possessed under changed conditions. The balance between these two ties is to be seen in the way in which a man and his wife's brother are often next door neighbours and the best of friends. It may be suggested that this balance reflects the part-peasant part-proletarian condition of the Ovimbundu, the emergence of the conjugal family with its importance as the working team for the cultivation of cash crops, and the 'reshaping of' the brother-sister tie with the absence of husbands as labourers. It seems probable from the example of the substantial coffee-growers that had the Ovimbundu become full-time cultivators there would have been a strong trend towards isolated households and the weakening of the 'neo-matrilineal' pull which operates in the villages.

It is then the marriage tie which holds the vague, amorphous, kinship system together; it is against this vagueness that the marriage bond appears as the closest and most definite relation that can exist between two adults; and the change-over from trade to an economy based on wage-labour and cash agriculture has been accompanied by a transition from a double-descent kinship system to one in which the emergence of the elementary family co-exists with a certain pull towards matrilineal kin.

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story to explain the non-appearance of the others which satisfied the *chefe*.

The catechist was somewhat criticized for not having pushed on with the case, and thereby perhaps getting Guilherme landed in jail. Guilherme did move out of the village in February and settled near the outskirts of the Protestant village of Kalungwengwe. Kapapelo also set about moving out of Epalanga.

In the conflict which has just been described, there are three disputes, the question of the bridewealth which involved Luciano, Simbwyikoka, Guilherme, and the anthropologist, the quarrel between Paulo and Guilherme, and the subsequent uprising against Guilherme which takes its signal from Paulo's reference of the dispute to the priest.

The question of bridewealth repayment is subordinate to, indeed enclosed within, the main dispute. It does illustrate one point central to the problem of Umbundu social control, the absence of any court machinery. Jeremias and Luciano had tried to recover it by appealing to the priest; later Luciano and Simbwyikoka attempted to get it back by coming and demanding it, that is by self-help. Another extremely significant aspect of the social structure is revealed by this 'enclosed' case. Guilherme after a bitter dispute with Paulo which has ended in the arrest of Paulo and Bartolomeu borrows 200 escudos from them as a kinsman. This indicates that kinship ties can survive and function despite a quarrel which they do not check or prevent, a point which will be developed later in an examination of how kinship affects and is affected by a dispute.

The conflict cannot be viewed as simply a dispute between individuals, nor as a dispute between the holders of opposed roles. Guilherme was generally regarded as lacking 'sense' (*olondunge*), the quality, greatly admired by the Ovimbundu, of good judgement and decent social behaviour, and he confessed himself to be at fault. Yet he could not have acted in the way he did unless he had been a government headman, nor would the uprising against him have taken the form it did had he not held an office dependent on the post. There is, however, no necessary conflict between a government headman and the catechist or

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than the catechists and 'elders of the school'; yet the weakness of the agents of the post before a local opposition led, not by such traditional figures as Kafelo and Sapapula, but by the school functionaries, has been demonstrated. The post accepts intervention by the mission in supporting disputants, and the mission is ready to help not only its disputants but any native who has a strong case—that is, it has a generalized relation of patronage to all natives.[12] Hence, since in a serious dispute people look round for a 'civilized' patron, the mission is the one most likely to be appealed to, and these appeals usually go through its local agents.

While the symbiosis of two societies, one ruling, the other ruled, is a common feature of modern Africa, the extremely limited nature of the role delegated by the administration to the native authority, the 'patron-client' tie linking 'civilized' persons to the natives, and the opportunity given to patrons to intervene in cases before the *chefe*, seem to be distinctive features of Portuguese colonization.[13]

The third aspect of the social structure mentioned in the introductory section was the role in disputes of kinship ties. It has been earlier noted that Sapapula's supporters regarded him as a victim of a concerted alliance by Guilherme, Kapapelo, Lusase, and Ndonga. In fact Lusase had avoided getting involved in the dispute between Guilherme and Paulo, had supported Sapapula against Kapapelo, and had disclaimed responsibility for Ndonga's act. The present social structure is not one in which groups of kin habitually co-operate;[14] and it is possible that this belief in a coalition against Sapapula reflects memories of the old social structure.

Kinship ties between individuals seem neither to restrain them from quarrelling nor to be liable to permanent disruption as a result of quarrels. By August 1956 Kasosi was once again

[12] It is felt in administrative circles that the advancement of the African is mainly the responsibility of the missions.

[13] Anybody who knows the Portuguese well will acknowledge the importance given to personal influence (*cunha*) and the lack of esteem for bureaucratic (in the Weberian sense) procedures.

[14] See Chapters IV and VII for details on the kinship cores and on general aspects of kinship. The support which Sapapula received was not confined to his own kinship core—thus Gregorio who enthusiastically supported Sapapula was not even a kinsman.

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on good terms with Guilherme, who was a 'father' of his, and even earlier in June part of the celebrations which marked the marriage of Paulo's son Jose to Pungu, a girl from Namba, whose mother had at one time been married to Kapapelo, took place at the latter's house. Most strikingly of all, as has been noted, Guilherme could borrow money from Bartolomeu and Paulo at the height of their quarrel. The kinship bond exists outside of and, it might be said, at a deeper level than, the quarrel, and the rebukes hurled at an adversary reflect this. Paulo did not complain that Guilherme was a bad cross-cousin; instead he complained that Guilherme was not grateful to him for having baptized his dying child. The motive for co-operation or conflict in everyday life is to be found not in the tracing of genealogies but in the tally of reciprocal services and grievances between two individuals.

It may be claimed that this portrait of the kinship system which emerges from the disputes as being loosely structured and lacking defined obligations, but providing an underlying continuity, is very similar to that given in Chapter VII, which was based on questioning and the observation of everyday life.

The significance of the conjugal bond appears both positively in the way Luanga and Sapapula both take their wives to the post as witnesses, and negatively in the way the hostility of Kapapelo and Lusase to Sapapula is interpreted as being inspired by lust for his wife. Even the accusations of adultery so readily hurled about in disputes reflect the stereotype of the adulterer as the arch-enemy, and likewise the arch-enemy of the moment as at least a potential adulterer.

One question remains to be answered. Was Epalanga a particularly rebellious, squabbling, divided, village, because of the presence of an unusual number of aggressive individuals? It is not possible to estimate the number of disputes per village, and the disputes which have been described were the most important of which I had personal knowledge. They were touched off by personal antagonisms rather than by structural contradictions. Yet they tie in with what has been said of the Umbundu social structure in earlier chapters to such a degree that they seem to reflect the lines along which any case of the sort would proceed. The weakness of the chiefs, stripped of